

**2015**  
**LEGISLATIVE SESSION FINAL REPORT**  
**CITY OF ROANOKE**



# Roanoke Legislative Priorities

- City Charter legislation passed (Senators Edwards and Stanley and Delegate Head)
- Qualified immunity for blood samples passed (Senator Edwards)
- Line of Duty Act legislation requires VRS and DHRM to review JLARC recommendations and return a report by October 1, 2015 to the General Assembly on how to modernize and pay for the Line of Duty Act benefits
- The Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit was saved for another year; however, the bill sponsor (Hugo) intends to review all tax credits for the purpose of tax reform
- I-73 Transportation Compact created (Stanley)
- No legislation was passed that would harm passenger rail service returning to Roanoke
- Transit capital funding to increase by \$40 Million per year (HB 1887, Jones)



# Roanoke Legislative Priorities, cont.

- We were able to secure a guarantee from the Department of Social Services that Sabrina's Place will be able to compete for anti-domestic violence grants (Rasoul)
- Legislation to allow localities ban plastic bags because they are a public nuisance passed the Senate 20-16, but was tabled in the House Commerce and Labor Committee (McWaters)
- Legislation that would repeal the requirement that City procurements must be published in the newspaper and instead require that procurements be published on Virginia's "eva.virginia.gov" Internet procurement portal was again defeated (Head)
- A new Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court judgeship was funded in the Roanoke Circuit



# Public Education

- Legislation passed the House and was again defeated in the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee that would allow School Boards to set a start date prior to Labor Day
- Funding for K-12 was largely held harmless
- No effort was undertaken to create an Urban Schools Task Force to review the challenges, identify best practices and make recommendations for how to improve public education in Virginia's urban school districts; Sen. Edwards pointed out that this can be done via a Governor's Executive Order or by a decision by the Secretary of Education to create one

# Transportation Funding

- The General Assembly passed a completely new transportation funding policy (HB 1887, Jones)
- Among other provisions, the legislation:
  - establishes the high-priority projects program and the highway construction district grant program
  - this legislation replaces the \$500 million annual allocation made by the CTB and the 40-30-30 allocation formula to the primary, secondary, and urban highways with a new allocation of funds
  - Beginning July 1, 2020 after funds are set aside for maintenance of highways, the remaining funds are allocated in this manner:
    - 45% to state of good repair purposes (def: improvement of deficient pavement conditions and improvement of structurally deficient bridges)
    - 27.5% to the high priority projects program (def: projects of regional or statewide significance, such as projects that reduce congestion or increase safety, accessibility, environmental quality, or economic development)
    - 27.5% for the highway construction district grant program
      - The CTB will solicit projects and strategies from local governments for consideration in the applicable highway construction district's grant program
      - Projects and strategies will be screened, evaluated, and selected by the CTB according to the process established pursuant to subsection B of § 33.2-214.1 (HB 2) but shall be within a highway construction district and not outside such highway construction district
      - Projects and strategies from localities within a highway construction district shall be scored against projects and strategies within the same highway construction district
      - Only those candidate projects and strategies submitted by a locality shall be funded

# State Budget Update, key items

- \$30 Million reversion for aid to localities was eliminated saving Roanoke about \$650,000
- Provides 2% pay increase for state supported local employees
- Budget funds state's share for a 1.5% pay increase for teachers and gives localities flexibility on when and how to fund their share of the pay raise
- Funds 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter per diems for state responsible prisoners in regional jails
- HB 599 (police department) funding restored to 2014 levels
- State reimbursement for regional jail construction, expansion or renovation was reduced from 50% to 25%
- State funded \$187 Million VRS payment to get VRS funded status to 90%
- Virginia Housing Trust Fund receives \$4 Million each budget year for affordable rental housing loans and grants
- Funds \$5 Million in FY 16 for 50% matching grants to localities to reduce stormwater runoff pollution
- Directs DRPT to study the ability of private operators (including TNCs such as Uber and Lyft) to provide paratransit services



# Ethics Bill (Conflict of Interest Act)

- It is highly likely that Governor McAuliffe will offer amendments to the General Assembly passed bill (HB 2070 Gilbert, SB 1424 Norment)
- The bill includes:
  - \$100 cap on gifts – tangible and intangible – from lobbyists, companies or organizations that employ lobbyists or a business that does - or attempts to do - business with the state or a locality
  - The gift reporting threshold remains at \$50
  - Effective date is January 1, 2016
  - Exceptions to the gift cap:
    - Widely attended events (25 or more attendees, open to the public)
    - Gifts from personal friends, spouse (legislation creates a friend test)
    - Travel paid for by third parties (must first be approved by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council)
  - Other provisions impacting local government officials:
    - Official travel paid for by a locality is not a gift, it's official business
    - Out-of-State travel paid for by a locality must be reported
    - Local officials will file their forms locally, not with the Ethics Advisory Council

# Public Safety vs. Privacy Issue

- HB 1673 (Anderson) and SB 965 (Peterson) restrict the use of technology to collect and maintain information outside of an investigation; the legislation:
  - Provides that unless a criminal or administrative warrant has been issued, law-enforcement and regulatory agencies shall not use surveillance technology to collect or maintain personal information where such data is of unknown relevance and is not intended for prompt evaluation and potential use respecting suspected criminal activity or terrorism by any individual or organization
  - authorizes law-enforcement agencies to collect information from license plate readers, provided such information is held for no more than seven days and is not subject to any outside inquiries or internal usage, except in the investigation of a crime or missing persons report; after seven days such collected information must be purged from the system unless it is being utilized in an ongoing investigation
  - adds to the definition of "personal information" vehicle license plate numbers and information that affords a basis for inferring an individual's presence at any place



# Veto Session and Questions

- The General Assembly will reconvene on April 15, 2015 to address Governor McAuliffe's vetoes and amendments to the State Budget and all legislation.
- Questions about the Legislative Session or Other Issues?